

Animal Ethics Committee

Constitution of the Animal Ethics Committee

The University establishes one or more Animal Ethics Committees which operate in accordance with the principles and rules for the operation of committees. Members must act in accordance with the University Committee Members' Code of Conduct.

Constitution

This constitution is to be read in conjunction with the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th edition 2013.

The Code states:

Ensure the animal ethics committee has terms of reference

2.2.18 The institution must ensure that the AEC has terms of reference that are publicly available and include the following provisions:

- 1. the scope of its responsibilities for ethical review, approval and monitoring of animal care and use (see Chapter 2.3)*
- 2. its institutional accountability*
- 3. its mechanisms of reporting*
- 4. the way in which it meets the requirements for categories of minimum membership.*

Position of the committee within The University of Western Australia

1. The Animal Ethics Committees (AEC) are externally legislated to oversee UWA research involving animals.

Role

2.(1) Each AEC is responsible to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for—

- (a) ensuring that all care and use of animals by the institution is conducted in compliance with the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 2013 (the Code);
- (b) examining and approving; or approving subject to modification; or rejecting written proposals relevant to the use of animals for research and teaching purposes;
- (c) monitoring the acquisition, transportation, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals;
- (d) recommending to the institution any measures needed to ensure that the standards of the Code are maintained, including approving guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held and used for research and teaching purposes;
- (e) examining and commenting on institutional plans and policies that may affect animal welfare;
- (f) monitoring and investigating the emergency treatment or euthanasia for any animal;
- (g) investigating any suspected or potential non-compliance with the Code;
- (h) withdrawing approval for any proposal for the use of animals previously authorised, where the practices being applied are inconsistent with the approval of the Code;
- (i) ensuring that a register of approved projects is maintained;
- (j) reviewing annual and final reports of approved submitted projects;
- (k) reviewing ad hoc and monitoring reports on animal use provided to the AEC; and
- (l) performing all other duties required by the Code.

(2) In considering written projects an AEC must—

- (a) ensure that the use of animals is justified, provides for the welfare of those animals and incorporates the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement; as defined in the Code; and
- (b) take into consideration factors including ethical standards and the anticipated scientific or educational value of the work being undertaken.

Membership

- 3.(1) Members of each AEC are appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and comprise—
- (a) an established UWA teaching and research staff member preferably from a discipline that does not use animals for research and teaching purposes and preferably with a background in ethics, as Chair;
 - (b) a Deputy Chair appointed from among the members;
 - (c) at least one and up to two persons with qualifications in veterinary science and with experience relevant to the activities of the institution (*Category A*);
 - (d) at least one and up to five suitably qualified persons with substantial recent experience in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities (*Category B*);
 - (e) at least one and up to two persons with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals, who are not employed by or otherwise associated with the institution, and who are not involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (*Category C*);
 - (f) at least one and up to four persons who are independent of the institution and who have never been involved in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities, either in the course of their employment or after their undergraduate education (*Category D*).
- (2) In addition to the prescribed membership Categories A to D, the institution may appoint a person responsible for the routine care of animals within the institution to each of the AECs.
- (3) To ensure that its composition complies with the Code or to avoid conflicts of interest, an AEC may co-opt members who may be from other AECs of the University.
- (4) The Animal Welfare Officer and the Director, Animal Care Services, or their nominee, are standing invitees and provide advice as requested by the Chair.
- (5) An AEC may invite other people to attend individual meetings to provide expert opinion to assist deliberations.

Terms of office

- 4.(1) The term of office of appointed and co-opted members is three years, but members may be reappointed or co-opted for additional terms subject to (2).
- (2) A member must not be appointed for more than three successive terms.

Quorum

- 5.(1) The quorum for an AEC is four members, who must include a separate person from each of Categories A, B, C and D as stipulated by the Code.
- (2) If an AEC has more than four members, Category C and D members together must represent no less than one third of the members present at a meeting.
- (3) The Chair must be an additional member to the Category A, B, C and D members and is not counted for the purposes of determining whether a quorum is present.

Decisions

- 6.(1) Subject to (3), decisions of an AEC are made on the basis of consensus
- (2) Where consensus cannot be reached after reasonable efforts to resolve differences, the committee must explore with the applicant(s) ways of modifying the project that may lead to consensus
- (3) If consensus cannot be reached, an AEC may proceed to a majority decision but only after—
- (a) members have been allowed a period of time to review their positions; and

(b) following further discussion.

Frequency of meeting

7. Each AEC normally meets every 4 – 6 weeks, but may meet more frequently as necessary to ensure decisions are made as promptly as possible